

Message Text

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O R 272243Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
INFO USLO RIYADH
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: PROPOSED PRESS GUIDANCE RE: FLOGGING AMCIT
REF STATE 163823
IN RESPONSE TO PRESS INQUIRIES ON POSSIBLE SAUDI FLOGGING
USCITS, (DETAILS OF QUERIES SUBJECT OF SEPTTEL) DEPARTMENT
PROPOSES USE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE PROVIDING YOU CONCUR. INFO
BELOW DRAWN FROM JIDDA 6495--9/22/77 RIYADH 514--6/26/78
AND LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR WEST TO SENATOR TALMADGE,
DATED 9/25/77.

Q: HAVE ANY AMERICANS EVER BEEN FLOGGED BY THE SAUDIS?

A: WE KNOW OF ONLY ONE SUCH CASE IN WHICH AN AMERICAN WAS
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FLOGGED.

Q: CAN YOU GIVE US THE PARTICULARS?

YES. AN AMERICAN CITIZEN WAS ARRESTED IN LATE JUNE, 1977
AFTER BEING INVOLVED IN A FIST FIGHT WITH A SAUDI CITIZEN.
A HEARING WAS HELD AUGUST 24 AND CONCLUDED AUGUST 29. THE
SUBJECT AGREED TO PAY FOR THE DENTAL REPAIR WORK REQUIRED

FOR THE SAUDI'S TEETH. HE WAS SENTENCED TO TWO MONTHS IN JAIL AND 90 STROKES OF A CANE TO BE ADMINISTERED EACH MONTH. THE TWO-MONTH, SENTENCE HOWEVER, WAS WAIVED IN LIGHT OF THE TIME THE SUBJECT HAD ALREADY SERVED IN JAIL AND THE 90 STROKES WERE REDUCED TO 20. THE CANING WAS LATER

ADMINISTERED AT THE LOCAL POLICE STATION ON SEPT. 21. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICIALS FOLLOWING THIS, THE SUBJECT STATED THAT THE STROKES HAD BEEN LIGHTLY ADMINISTERED AND THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN PHYSICALLY INJURED.

Q: WHAT ACTION DID THE US EMBASSY TAKE IN THIS CASE?

A: EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE IN CONTACT WITH THE SUBJECT THROUGH OUT THE CASE. AFTER THE SUBJECT WAS ORIGINALLY SENTENCED, THE JUDGE IN THE CASE STATED THAT THE 20 STROKES COULD BE WAIVED UPON APPEAL TO THE GOVERNOR OF RIYADH. APPEAL WAS MADE BUT NOT GRANTED. THE EMBASSY THEN, HOPED TO DELAY THE PUNISHMENT BY MAKING A PERSONAL APPEAL TO THE GOVERNOR. LATER, THE EMBASSY PHONED THE KING'S PERSONAL ADVISOR AND ASKED HIM TO REQUEST A WAIVER FROM THE KING. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CANING WAS CARRIED OUT BEFORE THE KING COULD ACT.

Q: WILL OTHER AMERICANS BE SUBJECTED TO THIS FORM OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT?
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A: PRESENTLY, THERE ARE FOUR CASES YET TO BE DECIDED IN WHICH FLOGGING IS PART OF THE SENTENCE. THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED ARE OUT OF JAIL AND THEIR CASES ARE PENDING BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF ULEMAS.

Q: WHAT STEPS HAS THE EMBASSY TAKEN TO INTERCEDE ON THEIR BEHALF?

A: WE HAVE BEEN IN CONSTANT CONSULTATION WITH SAUDI OFFICIALS ON THIS MATTER AND HAVE MADE OUR VIEWS KNOWN. WE WOULD NOTE THAT SAUDI ARABIA, LIKE ANY SOVEREIGN COUNTRY, EXPECTS VISITORS TO ABIDE BY ITS LAWS. WE CONCUR WITH THIS BUT HAVE ALSO STRESSED THAT IN OUR VIEW CANING CONSTITUTES A CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT. VANCE

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